USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

Iraq: Crop Progress Report

MY 2009/10

December Report – Week 1 **December 5th, 2008**

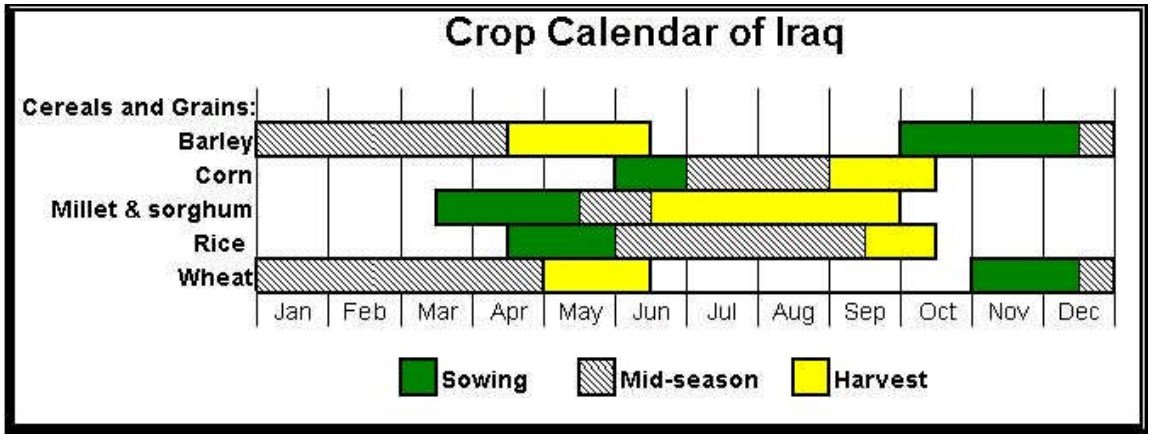
1. Iraq is roughly divided into two agricultural regions that include the predominantly rainfed cropland in the northern governorates and the irrigated cropland in the central and southern governorates along the Tigris and Euphrates river basin. Approximately 40% of cultivated wheat area and 60% of cultivated barley area in Iraq are rainfed (COSIT 2007); therefore start of season agro-meteorological conditions in the rainfed governorates play a significant role in winter grains establishment and ultimately the total national production.

2. November cumulative rainfall was estimated between 10mm and 50mm (0.4" to 2") throughout most of Iraq. Highest rainfall was received in the predominantly rainfed governorates with the exception of Dhi Qar, Maysan, and Al Basrah in the south (Figure 1). However, most accumulated rainfall during the month of November occurred during the final weeks; nearly a month after the first significant precipitation event of the season in late October (Figure 2).

3. Although precipitation for MY 2009/10 is greatly improved in comparison to the previous year (Figure 3), some caution is granted when considering the following:
   - Delayed sowing in the potentially highest producing governorate of Ninawa*.
   - Forecasted dry conditions over the next 7 days as the planting window comes to a close.
   - Monthly cumulative rainfall remained well below normal during October and November until significant rain events near the end of each month brought a maximum of 50mm to 75mm (2" to 3") (Figure 4). Given that evapotranspiration rates average +2mm/day this time of year, a significant portion of water needed for healthy seed establishment may have been lost between these two rain events.

4. High resolution Quickbird imagery collected over Ninawa on December 1st, 2008 was compared to the previous year on November 24th, 2007. The current imagery did not provide clear evidence of field activity, but several of the surrounding villages, perennial streams, and fields showed signs of inundation. In contrast, the previous year showed overall dry conditions. Further remote sensing analysis during crop emergence will aid in understanding and quantifying how well the winter crop was initially established (Figure 5).

*Start of season status for other important rainfed governorates such as At Ta'min and Arbil is unknown.



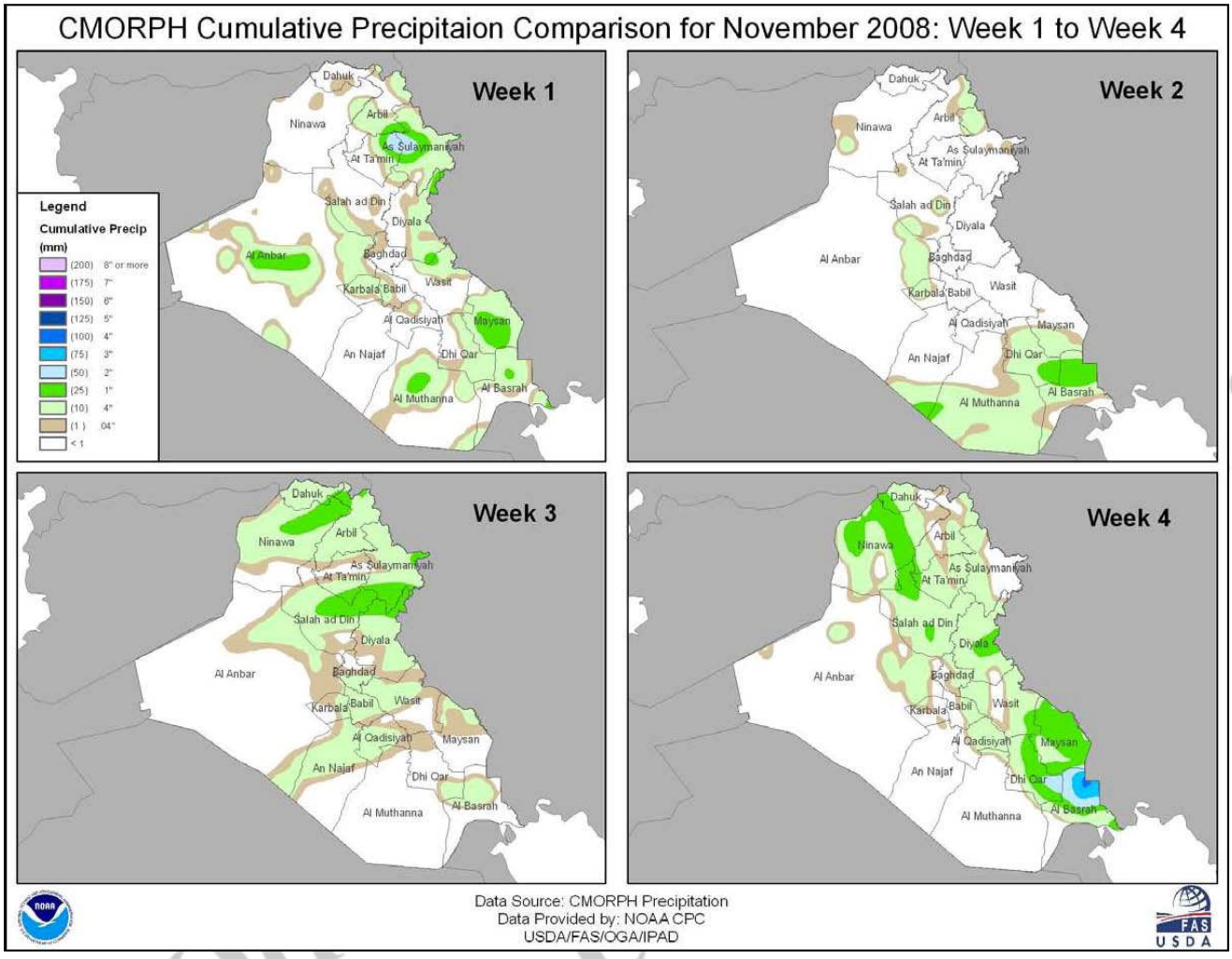


Figure 1: CMORPH weekly cumulative precipitation comparison for the month of November 2008.

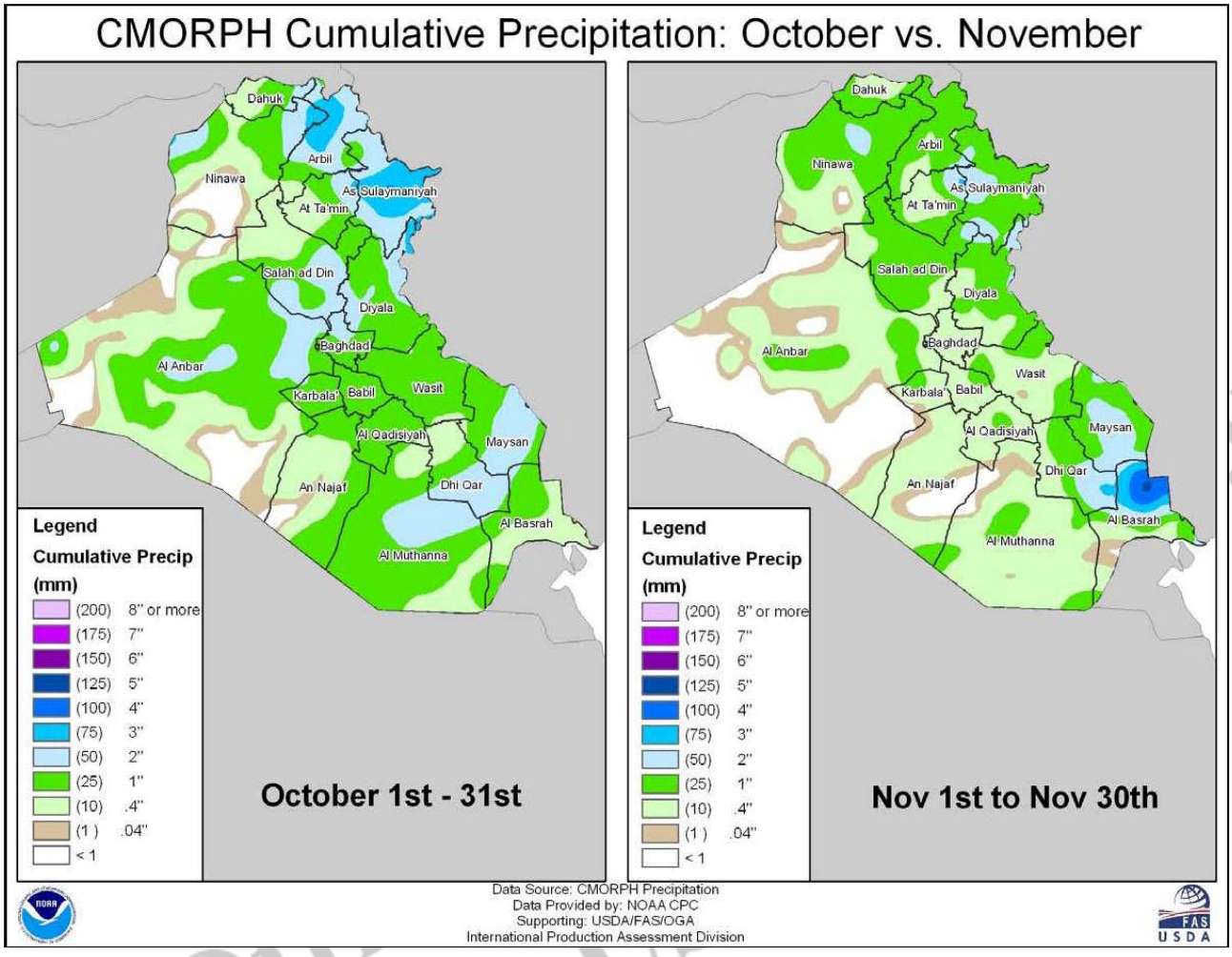


Figure 2: CMORPH monthly cumulative precipitation comparison: October 2008 vs. November 2008.

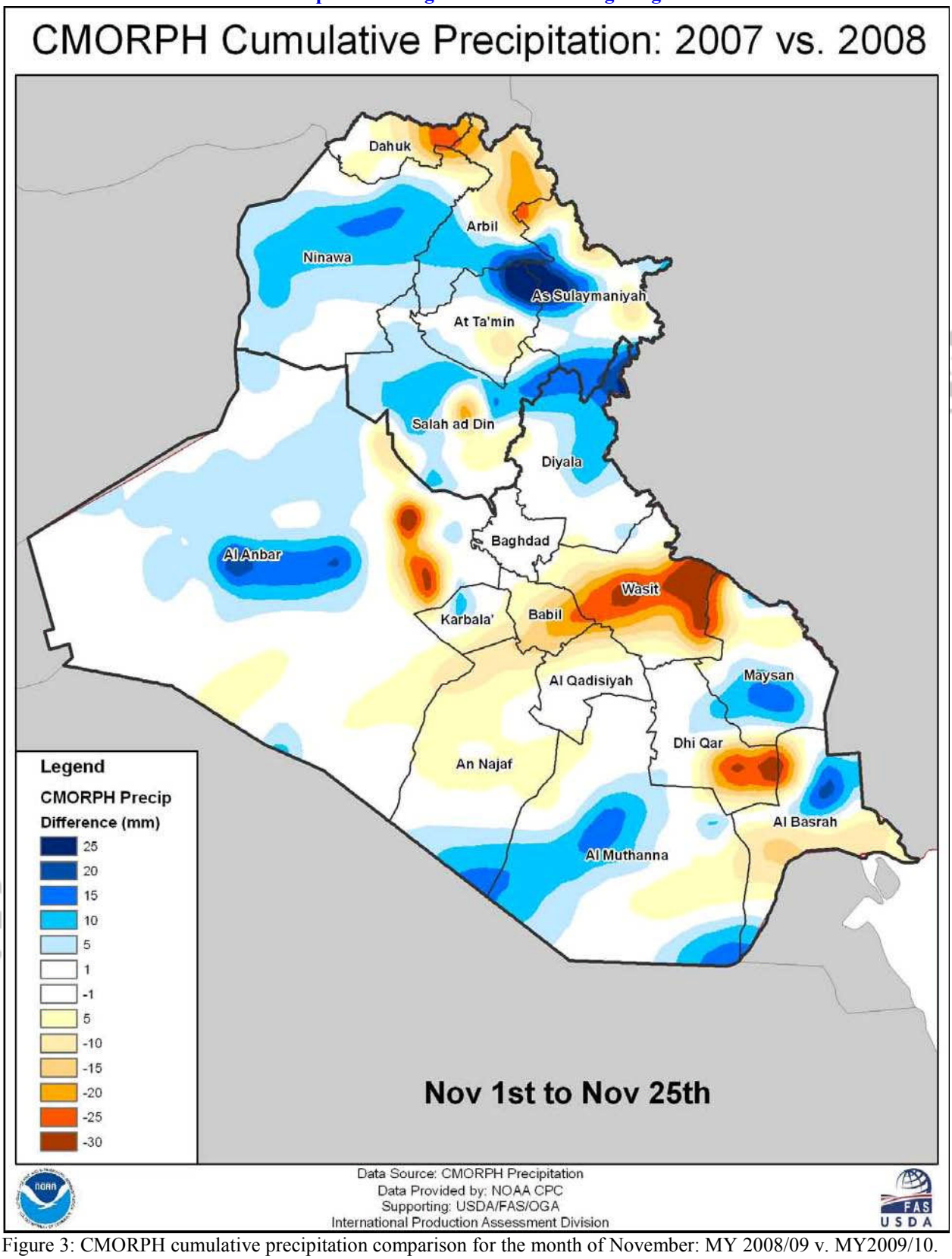


Figure 3: CMORPH cumulative precipitation comparison for the month of November: MY 2008/09 v. MY2009/10.

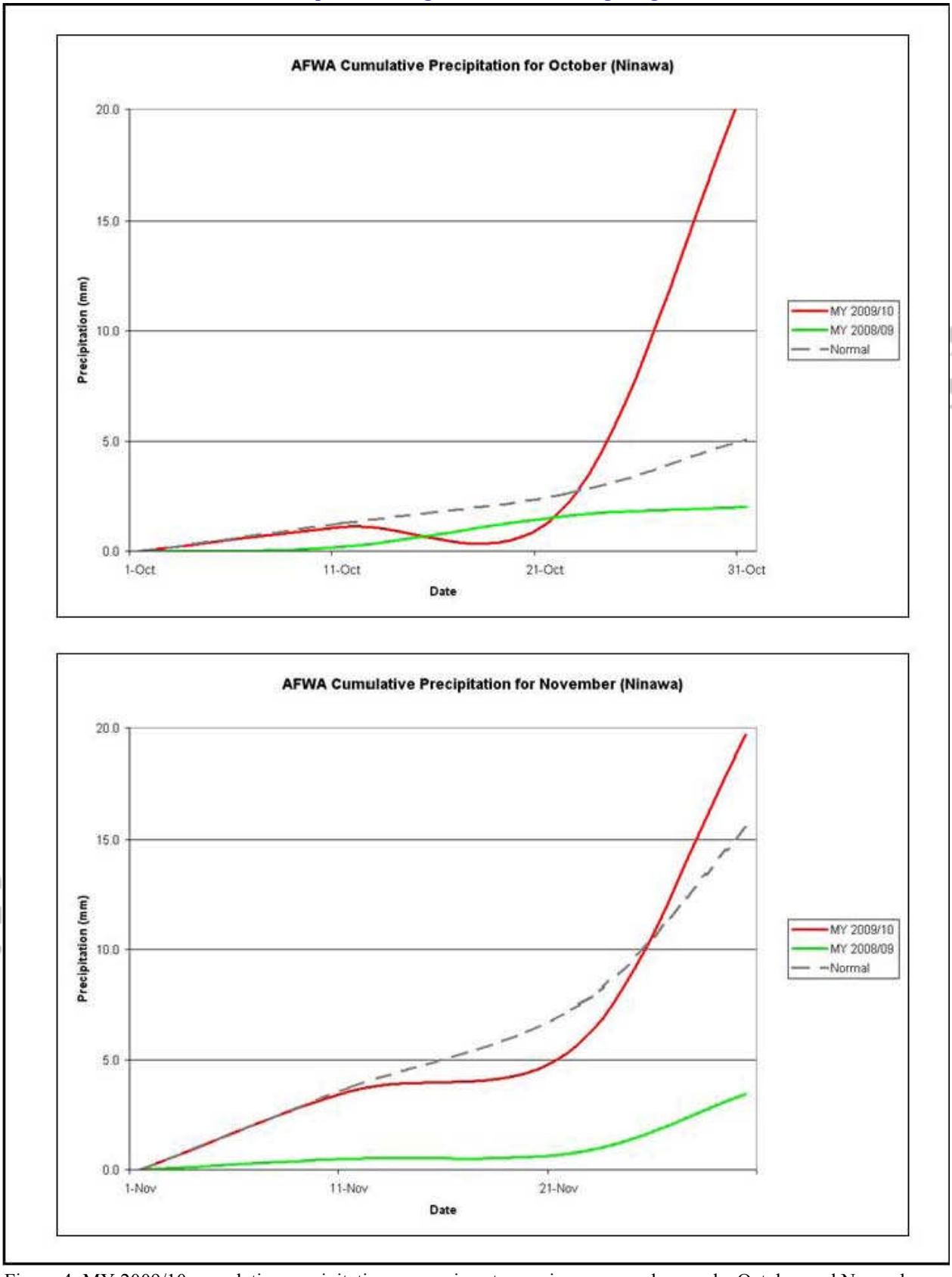


Figure 4: MY 2009/10 cumulative precipitation comparison to previous year and normals: October and November.

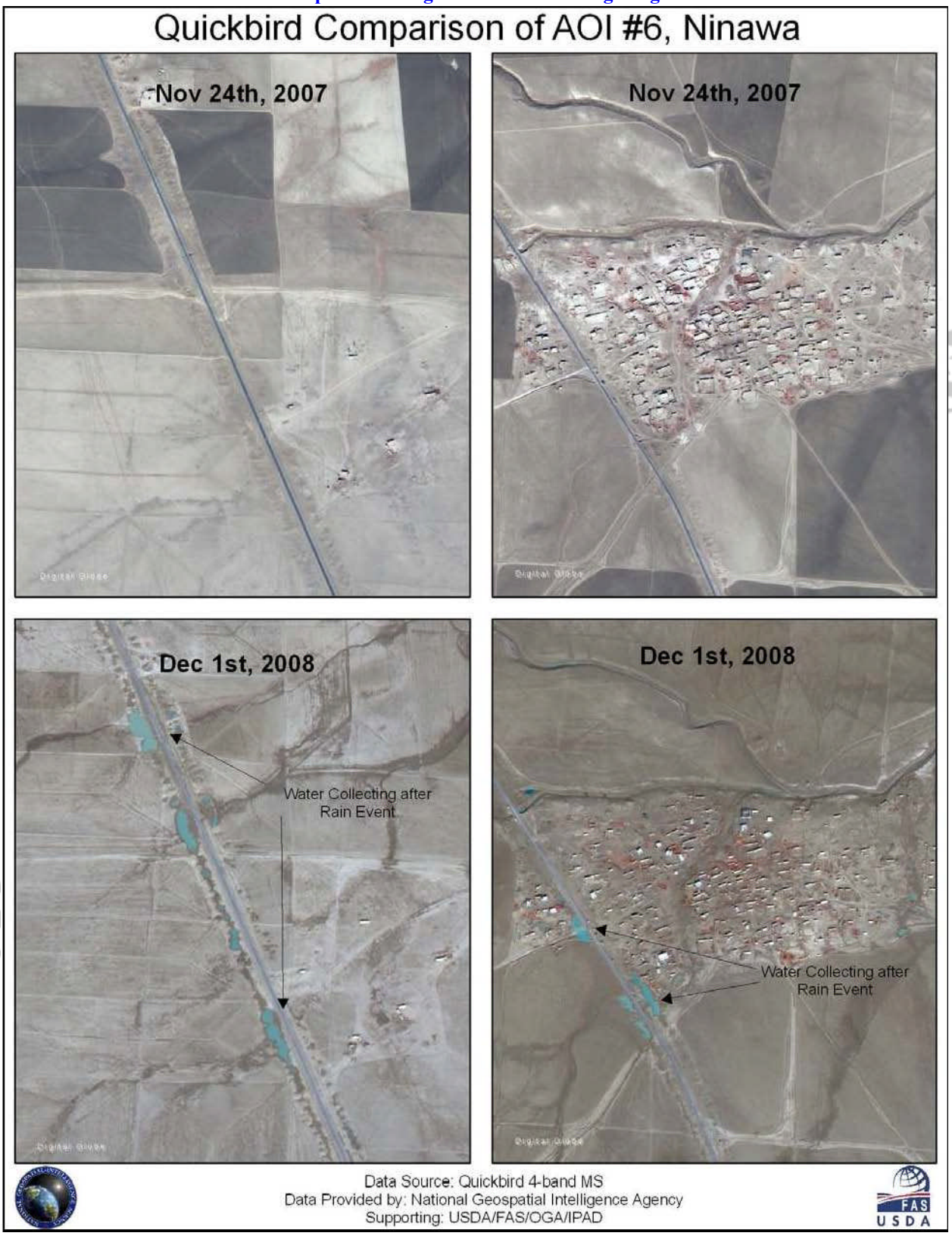


Figure 5: Quickbird image comparison over AOI#6, Ninawa: November 24th, 2007 vs. December 1st, 2008

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